



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING COMMUNICATION

By Stephanie MacFarland

- ❖ Establish rapport (trust).
- ❖ Encourage anticipation, expectation on the child's part in interactions and activities.
- ❖ Promote turn-taking in conversation, in activities, and in playing.
- ❖ Follow (imitate) the child's own ways of interacting with his/her world to gain rapport, acceptance, understanding of child's communicative signals and knowledge of how the child wishes to interact with you (what he/she may like or not like you to do or continue).
- ❖ Learn how to best "read" and predict the child's way of communicating, but do not always anticipate for him/her or put "words in his/her mouth.
- ❖ Promote imitation initially using co-active manipulation and gradually fade out towards parallel imitation and deferred imitation.
- ❖ Use objects within activities that are meaningful and functional for the child. Objects can be used as a reference or a medium of communication to represent a specific activity or person, for example.
- ❖ Provide meaningful contexts within which children can become active learners. (The context is meaningful in that it includes age-appropriate, functional activities within functional environments.)
- ❖ Learn to wait for a child to respond to or initiate communication. (Do not make the child too dependent on a cue from you to communicate. The child should be an active learner as much as possible.)
- ❖ Find out what the child enjoys doing so that you can creatively expand the child's repertoire of activities and communication.
- ❖ Promote choice making once a repertoire of activities, people, places, foods, drinks, etc. is established (choice is particularly important for future communicative skills).
- ❖ Promote consistency with the child so that he/she may establish security and a foundation upon which to learn. But, also provide some planned change so that the child can initiate a response to the change and learn to adapt to it, or express a protest.

